

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
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MUNICH FOR GILMORE

E.O. 11652: NJ
WSQM, CSCE, CVIS, PFOR, BU
SUBJECT: GOB PERFORMANCE ON DIVIDED FAMILY CASES

REF: A) SOFIA A-14, APRIL 25, 1977; B) SOFIA A-52, OCT. 27,
1976; C) SOFIA 0720

1. SUMMARY: OUR MOST RECENT ANALYSIS OF DIVIDED FAMILY AND
FAMILY VISITATION CASES KNOWN TO EMBASSY SHOWS THAT GOB
PERFORMANCE HAS VERY CONSIDERABLY IMPROVED DURING PAST SIX
MONTHS. DIFFICULTIES REMAIN: THERE ARE A FEW CASES IN WHICH
GOB REFUSES TO BUDGE (MAREV AND INKIOW) OUT OF A DESIRE TO
PUNISH SPONSORS, AND THERE IS A TENDENCY TO DIFFERENTIATE
BETWEEN GDER PEOPLE, WHOM GOB DOESN'T MIND LOSING PERMA-
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NENTLY, AND WORKING AGE MALES WHO FIND IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT
TO OBTAIN PASSPORTS. NEVERTHELESS IT IS OUR JUDGEMENT, WHICH
WE WOULD NOT HAVE MADE EVEN THREE MONTHS AGO, THAT GOB WILL
GO TO BELGRADE WITH FAIRLY RESPECTABLE RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT.
END SUMMARY.

2. REF A, NOW EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON, PROVIDES DEPT WITH

LATEST CASE-BY-CASE RUNDOWN OF DIVIDED FAMILY CASES KNOWN TO EMBASSY, UPDATING LIST SUPPLIED REF B. AIRGRAM MAKES FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS IMPRESSIMMQ 3 CASES WERE ACTIVELY PURSUED WITH GOB. OF THESE, GOB ISSUED PASSPORTS AND EXIT PERMITS IN 26 CASES, REFUSED TWO CASES (MAREV AND INKIOW) "DEFINITELY," REFUSED FIVE OTHERS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY UNDER APPEAL (WE EXPECT SOME OF THESE ALSO WILL BE ISSUED), AND HAS 10 CASES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION.

-- FULLY 28 CASES UNDER OUR NOMINAL CASELOAD SHOULD BE ELIMINATED FROM LIST BECAUSE BULGARIAN APPLICANT IN FACT DOES NOT WISH TO TRAVEL, CANNOT BE CONTACTED, OR CASE IS NOT ONE OF A BONA FIDE DIVIDED FAMILY.

-- THERE ARE IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING, ONLY ANOTHER EIGHT CASES WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN ACTIVE BUT IN WHICH WE KNOW FAMILIES HAVE BEEN GATHERING DOCUMENTS PREPARATORY TO SUBMITTING FORMAL APPLICATION TO GOB. OF THESE EIGHT, FOUR ARE CASES IN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY GOB THAT APPROVAL WILL BE GRANTED WHEN FORMAL APPLICATION IS RECEIVED.

-- AS POINTED OUT REF C, IN ADDITION TO THESE "TOUGHER" CASES IN WHICH REPRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN NECESSARY, GOB HAS ISSUED PASSPORTS AND EXIT PERMITS IN ANOTHER 192 FAMILY VISITATION CASES IN OU AND THUS FAR IN 1977, CASES IN WHICH EMBASSY HAD MADE NO REPRESENTATION AT ALL. THESE CASES WERE NOT REPORTED PRIOR TO REF C SINCE THERE WAS NO RECORD OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRIOR REFUSAL OR EXTENSIVE CORRESPONDENCE WITH SPONSOR IN US. GOB LIKELY TO CITE THESE CASES AT BELGRADE AS PART OF ITS STATISTICAL CASE.

3. IN RETROSPECT, IT APPEARS THAT THE "WATERSHED" IN DIVIDED FAMILY CASES WAS PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV'S COMMITMENT TO FORMER AGRICULTURE SECRETARY EARL BUTZ A YEAR AGO THAT DIVIDED FAMILY CASES WOULD BE DEALT WITH EXPEDITIOUSLY AND POSITIVELY. RESULTS BECAME VISIBLE ONLY GRADUALLY, WITH PACE PICKING UP VERY CONSIDERABLY DURING PAST SIX MONTHS. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT NUMBER OF ACTUAL CASES WAS SMALLER THAN HAD BEEN THOUGHT EARLIER, DUE TO NON-INTEREST OF MANY PUTATIVE APPLICANTS OR DISSOLUTION OF RELATIONSHIP WITH PUTATIVE SPONSORS.

4. THOUGH GOOD IN OVERALL STATISTICAL TERMS, BULGARIAN PERFORMANCE REMAINS SPOTTY. THERE REMAIN CASES SUCH AS MAREV AND INKIOW WHERE GOB HAS BEEN QUITE INTRACTABLE AND APPARENTLY INTENDS TO PUNISH SPONSORS, WHOM IT REGARDS AS ACTIVE POLITICAPENEVES BY REFUSAL. EASIEST CASES TO GET THROUGH

GOB AT THIS TIME ARE THOSE INVOLVING ELDERLY PARENTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS, BUT EVEN THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PAST WHEN GOB DREW CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPONSORS WHO HAD LEFT BULGARIA "ILLEGALLY" (I.E. HAD DEFECTED WESTWARDS), AND THOSE WHO HAD LEFT WITH GOVT APPROVAL OR BEFORE 1945. THIS DISTINCTION SEEMS NO LONGER DRAWN BY GOB. ASIDE FROM "POLITICAL CASES" LIKE MAREV AND INKIOW, HARDEST CASES TO GET THROUGH AT THIS TIME ARE THOSE IN WHICH AN ENTIRE FAMILY, INCLUDING YOUNGER PEOPLE OF "PRODUCTIVE AGES," WANTS TO EMIGRATE AS A UNIT. IN SOME OF THESE CASES, MALES BETWEEN 20 AND 45 ARE DENIED PASSPORTS. SOMETIMES THEY ARE TOLD PASSPORTS WILL BE ISSUED THEM WHEN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY UNIT HAVE RETURNED TO BULGARIA FROM THEIR VISIT TO US.

5. JUDGING FROM CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE HAD WITH COLLEAGUES FROM OTHER WESTERN EMBASSIES, THEIR EXPERIENCE OVER RECENT PAST ESSENTIALLY PARALLELS OUR OWN. ALTHOUGH THE PICTURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS NOT ENTIRELY ROSY, GOB WILL BE ABLE AT BELGRADE TO POINT TO STATISTICS SMWINVT HAS MADE CLEAR AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PREVIOUS POLICY AND PRACTICE ON DIVIDED FAMILIES AND IN FACT HAS ISSUED PASSPORTS IN MAJORITY OF CASES. HERZ

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